

## AP English Literature and Composition

### Summer Assignment

For this year's summer assignment, you will be reading and analyzing three short stories and then **choosing the one story you believe you understand the best to write a paragraph that presents your thoughtful analysis.** These stories introduce the important aspects of literary analysis and the ability to write effectively about that analysis; in other words, this assignment is an initial foray into the fundamental requirements of the class.

**You will submit your typed annotations to me for a completion grade and the paragraph for the full grading process. Note: the answers to the analysis questions on that story should show up in the paragraph you write.**

The three short stories you need to read are:

Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour"

Ray Bradbury's "August 2002"

and Tobias Wolff's "Nightingale."

The stories are available on our AP Lit Canvas website.

Each story will be used to explore an author's tool and how he or she uses it to develop a thematic idea, the author's purpose. Indeed, this combination forms the backbone of the AP Literature test, which consistently asks students to identify how an author utilizes a literary tool (character, setting, narration, etc.) to suggest "the meaning of the work as a whole" (big idea-theme) in the story.

As you read and annotate, look for **tonal words, figurative language, evocative sections of text that help you understand what is happening in the story and the point(s) the author is making.** Ask questions, identify tone, mood, phrases that describe character, setting, narration techniques, and plot events.

**Below, for each story, is a series of questions you are expected to answer in your annotations. Please type up your answers to these questions: *note, this is what will be submitted for a completion grade. I am looking for thoughtful answers that present a reasonable interpretation of the story – not necessarily the "right" answer. A thoughtful consideration as described above will certainly make your writing a better product. Whichever story you choose to explore in your paragraph should integrate the answers to the analysis questions posed within your paragraph!***

- 1) Start your annotations and analysis with Chopin's story. Address the following points. Be sure to note specific evidence from the text that supports your analysis. Type your notes after you have read the story. This will entail rereading the story. **These typed notes will comprise the first third of the annotations submitted for a completing grade.**

- a. Identify four sections of text that suggest the protagonist's feelings about her life as a married woman in her era. Label them 1-4.
- b. Explain, briefly, what these four sections of text reveal about her perspective and motives (*hint: why does she lock herself in her room?*)
- c. Regarding your annotations, evaluate your textual evidence; which are the strongest? That is, which lead you most directly to author's purpose (the point about life Chopin is making in her story)?
- d. Identify the plot order Chopin uses in her story; briefly summarize, focusing on cause and effect, what happens in the story. How does Chopin's plot shape the story? What point might Chopin be positing with the ending of her story?
- e. Plot, of course, revolves around conflict. Identify the central conflict of the story. (i.e.- man versus?) Explore how this conflict affects your understanding of Chopin's meaning?
- f. Figurative language, most notably symbolism and irony, are vital tools of an author. Identify an important symbol in the story. What is it and what does it symbolize? Also note an important use of irony in the story. What is the point of the irony?

*If you choose this story for the paragraph aspect of this assignment, compose a well-written paragraph in which you examine how Chopin uses the literary elements of either character or plot (including conflict) to develop the meaning of her work (a theme of the story).*

*Remember to include the answers to the above questions within your paragraph.*

- 2) Continue your formal analysis with Bradbury's delightfully political story, turning your analytical eye to setting. *A practical, but critical note: literature is not written in a void; it comes from the time and place in which the author lived.* I strongly recommend you look up Bradbury; when did he live? Where did he live? What important world events might have shaped his consciousness? *Note: again, the questions noted below must be answered in a document that is typed up for submission as part of your completion grade.*
  - a. Identify four sections of text that establish the setting of the story. Because mood and setting are intimately connected, note the mood that is conveyed through the setting.
  - b. Explain, briefly, what these four sections of text reveal about the setting. Evaluate your textual evidence: which are the strongest? That is, which lead you most directly to author's purpose (the point about his life Bradbury is making in his story)?
  - c. Analyze: in what ways are the setting in time and space essential ingredients of Bradbury's story? (*Hint: note the three different times presented in the story. Is one of these perspectives more correct? Why?*)
  - d. In this story, setting and symbolism work hand in hand. Explore this idea. How is Bradbury using setting symbolically? How might this be connected to a bigger idea he is presenting in his story – his meaning?
  - e. Go beyond the setting when exploring Bradbury's use of symbolism. Could the characters also have symbolic resonance?

- f. What form of narration (POV) is Bradbury using? Why might he have chosen this POV? That is, how does it further the meaning of the story as a whole?

*If you choose this story for the paragraph aspect of this assignment, compose a well-written paragraph analyzing how Bradbury uses the literary element of setting to posit the meaning of the work as a whole (the theme). This paragraph may venture into symbolism, mood, and narration as well. Remember to include the answers to the above questions within your paragraph.*

- 3) Conclude your formal analysis by exploring Tobias Wolff's "Nightingale," a problematic story that uses a rarely employed narration technique to present a befuddled protagonist. What point about societal expectations, dare I say rules, is the author's making? *Note: again, type of the answers to the following questions and submit as part of your completion grade.*
- a. Narrators or speakers relate accounts to readers and establish a relationship between the text and the reader. Identify four sections of text that establish Wolff's chosen narration technique. What POV is he using in his story?
  - b. Explore the use of POV. Why do you think he chose it? In what way does it help him build his story and the meaning of the story?
  - c. Tone, which goes hand in hand with narration, is the speaker's attitude toward the subject. Identify two sections of texts that suggest the tone of the story. Use tonal words to identify that tone. Why do you think Wolff is establishing this tone? That is, how does it ultimately help him create meaning in the story?
  - d. What is the central conflict of Wolff's story? Remember, conflict is often referred to as "man versus something" – man, nature, self, society. How does this conflict play into societal expectations?
  - e. Once again symbolism is quite important to the meaning of the story. Consider the title? What is a nightingale? What do nightingales do? In what way does the title connect to the main protagonist? What's up with the map? Symbolically what does it represent? Is it helpful to the protagonist?
  - f. And again, setting is important. Consider, the academy. Was it ever really there? How do you know? Why is it important?

*If you choose this story for the paragraph aspect of this assignment, answer the following prompt: As observed in Wolff's "Nightingale," societal expectations, though designed to help society as a whole, can be detrimental to an individual. In a well-written paragraph analyze how Wolff uses the literary tool of narration to portray the complex interaction between the needs of society versus the needs of an individual. This paragraph may venture into tone as well as narration. Remember to include the answers to the above questions within your paragraph.*

The bottom line: the questions above are meant to help you work your way through the analysis of the stories. What you will turn into me for evaluation are the well-written paragraph and the typed up annotative notes. Of course, this begs the question, what is a well-written paragraph? I am looking for:

1. A claim that answers the primary question, focusing on the literary term and the author's meaning as conveyed in the story. (This will be your thesis statement). For this assignment, please use it as your topic sentence.
2. Substantial textual evidence to support your claim. Be sure to analyze your textual support, explaining, specifically and in detail, how it supports your claim. Use logical reasoning, inference, and conclusion to validate your claim. Be sure to lead me through your thoughts to your conclusions: do not expect your reader to make inferences about your claims. (*Hint: substantial evidence is not a single quote, depending on the point, it might be 3-4, short, insightful quotes*).
3. Be sure to introduce your textual evidence, to blend the evidence into your own analysis, to correctly cite the evidence, and to fully explain the evidence to your claim. I think Benson calls this fully unpacking your quote.
4. At the end of each paragraph, provide a strong conclusion sentence that sums up your analysis and drives home your thesis (the claim).
5. Obviously, your paragraphs should adhere to the MLA style format. It should be typed, should follow standard spelling and punctuation rules, and should use a formal academic voice.
6. **Please print out the scoring guide for this assignment from the Canvas page and staple it to the top of your completed assignment.**